No. 8

BULLETIN

OF THE

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

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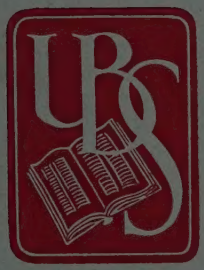

1951

FOURTH QUARTER

146, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, E.C.4

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

A WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF BIBLE SOCIETIES.

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UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

BULLETIN

FOURTH QUARTER - 1951

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* Translated into English by BERYL GUY.

Editorial

FROM 17th-24th February next, the Council of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES will meet in Ootacamund, South India. An invitation to meet in India the following year had already been received from the Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon in 1948, but circumstances made it necessary to postpone the fulfilment of this plan. However, the Council was anxious to show as soon as possible and in a concrete manner that the U.B.S. is indeed a true fellowship of Bible Societies *of the whole world* and it was therefore with gratitude and with joy that the Standing Committee accepted in 1950 the generous invitation of the B.S.I.P.C. (It is interesting to note that since that time the World Council of Churches has adopted a similar policy and that its Central Committee will also be meeting in India at the end of 1952.)

No doubt because of the distance and the considerable expense in which it would involve them, the majority of the European Bible Societies will be unable to send a representative to this meeting of the Council ; in this sense the Ootacamund meeting will not be very large or very representative, geographically speaking. Large grants for travelling could have been considered ; but at a time when the production costs of Scriptures are increasing rapidly and when gifts and collections are far from making the same progress, it does not seem to be economically wise to spend the funds put at the disposal of the Bible Societies for their missionary work on subsidising travel.

However, the probability of the almost complete absence of European delegates also raised a problem. Would it be worth-while to have such a limited Council meeting ? What effect could the decisions taken on such an occasion have ? Would it even be possible to take any decisions ?

The members of the Standing Committee gave serious consideration to these questions and soon came to the conclusion that a conference should be held in connection with the Council meeting, similar to the regional conferences held in Europe, the one in Vienna last year and the other in Nancy this autumn, but centred in the problems which face the Bible Societies and their agencies in South-East Asia. In view of the present revolution taking place on the Asiatic continent, a careful study of the situation and the defining of common lines of policy are of primary urgency.

Thus the next Council meeting of the U.B.S. will be held in a somewhat different setting from that of previous gatherings. There will probably only be very few decisions of a general nature taken. The attention of the gathering will be essentially concentrated on the particular problems of the young Societies of South-East Asia and of the agencies of the large Bible Societies in that same area. It is true that most of the problems raised will be problems which face all the Bible Societies, wherever they may be, and in this sense the Ootacamund conference will conserve a markedly " universal " character ; but the fact of studying them in the particular context of that part of the world will at the same time make it possible to get away from general ideas and to face the problems from their concrete and immediate aspect.

Finally, the Ootacamund meeting should also give the young Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon an opportunity for drawing fresh resources from the fellowship with men engaged elsewhere in the common ministry of the distribution of the Book ; it should also help the Society to make its work more widely known and to get a firmer foothold in the countries it seeks to serve. Although administratively independent, the B.S.I.P.C., like all other ' young ' Bible Societies, is still far from having acquired financial autonomy ; the Society is not even able to contribute, to the extent to which it would wish, to the tremendous expenses involved in printing the Scriptures for an area with more than 400 million inhabitants speaking 250 languages and dialects. The meeting in Ootacamund should therefore also present the churches and Christians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon with an opportunity for reconsidering their responsibility and their share in the work of the Bible Society and in helping the Society to take its full part in this immense enterprise.

The programme for the conference and for the Council meeting is taking shape. Several talks on the present situation in South-East Asia, on the relevance of the Bible, on the place of the Bible in the life of the Church and of the individual Christian, in evangelism, in the fight against illiteracy, etc., will open the way for discussion ; but our greatest need is not for lectures,

however learned and stimulating they may be, and so the essential part of the work will be carried out in study groups where the various questions will be examined in detail and where a policy should be defined for future action. Only from this joint work can there spring a new vision, a new inspiration and a new impetus. But even so we cannot expect any constructive results, unless the prayers of all those who are interested in the ministry of the Bible Societies surround the ones who are already preparing and will in a few months be assembling together and be confronted with one of the most difficult situations, but also one of the richest in possibilities and in hope with which the Bible Societies have ever been faced. And it is to this prayer that, in closing, I would like to call all the readers of these pages, so that in Ootacamund we shall not be erecting human constructions but that the Spirit of God may be present and active among us.

NEWS FROM ALL THE WORLD

Under this heading we do not intend to give only information of the Bible Societies, but we also want to include such facts as may or should have a bearing on Bible Society work. This information should therefore not only tell us what other Societies are doing, but should also help us to apprehend the whole realm of our common responsibilities and should lead us to think out how best we may extend our own activity in the future, in such a way as to fulfil our calling to the utmost.

Austria

A NEW effort to help the local churches to take more effective responsibility in the distribution of the Scriptures has been launched by the *Austrian Bible Committee.* All congregations of the State and Free Churches have been urged to have a " Bible table " in the vestibule of their place of worship and to promote the sale and distribution of the Scriptures. Each local church has been given a parcel of Scriptures, free of charge, by the Austrian Bible Committee. The proceeds from the sale of these books are to be used for the purchase of other copies of Scripture. This initiative has met with considerable appreciation. Funds which had accumulated from the sale of Scriptures given to the Austrian Bible Committee by the American Bible Society since the end of the war had made this action possible.

*

On 23rd September, 1951, Bible Sunday was celebrated throughout Austria for the fifth time since the end of the war. The evangelical churches of the Lutheran and Helvetic confession, as well as the Methodist and Baptist churches, took an active part in the celebrations. The Austrian Bible Committee published 30,000 copies of a Bible Sunday leaflet which was distributed to all those attending church services. This leaflet gives information about the financial problems of a Bible Society, and above all urges the leaders to take a part in the missionary work of Bible distribution.

On the evening of Bible Sunday a large gathering was held in Vienna in the hall belonging to the Methodist church. Seven hundred persons filled the hall to capacity. Dr. D. Gustav Entz, university professor, gave a talk on the subject " What is in the Bible ?". In his own particular way he succeeded in presenting his audience, in a simple yet gripping fashion, with a living and interesting picture of the wonderful contents of the Bible. The second main feature of the evening was the presentation by the director of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Austria, Mr. Karl Uhl, of the American Bible

Society film : " The Book for the world of tomorrow." With great interest the audience followed the film and the explanations. As in previous years, here again the united choirs of the Free Churches sang to the glory of God. In a closing word, the Chairman of the Austrian Bible Committee, Pastor F. Mayr, urged the promotion of Bible distribution work, particularly in Austria, by means of prayer, gifts and collaboration. The direction of the evening was in the hands of the Vice-Chairman of the Austrian Bible Committee, Dr. H. Liptak. Mr. A. L. Haig, secretary for Europe of the British and Foreign Bible Society, was present at the Bible Sunday celebrations in Vienna.

*

One of the colporteurs of the Austrian Bible Committee took part in the 1951 Boy Scouts' Jamboree in Bad Ischl and held services there. A large number of Scriptures were also circulated on that occasion.

*

The Vienna Bible Seminary, for which the Austrian Bible Committee has assumed responsibility together with other Christian groups, was again open from January to April this year, and provided much useful material for many young people active in the State and Free Churches. The lecturers were : Dr. D. G. Entz, Rector G. Göhring (both Lutherans), Pastor F. Mayr (Methodist, Chairman of the Austrian Bible Committee), Prediger A. Köster (Baptist).

Belgium

The *Belgian Bible Society* has issued a new edition of the Segond Bible with references. This has been printed for the Society in Holland by the well-known printing firm of Jongbloed, which also works for the Netherlands Bible Society. This new Bible is smaller in size (11 x 17cm) than the other available editions of the Segond Bible, and the references are given at the end of each verse concerned and not in the central column. Part of the edition has been printed on India paper.

*

In the Belgian town of Mecheln, a *Biblia regia* has been found which contains the text of the Bible in five languages. It was produced in 1571 on the orders of King Philip II. This well-preserved copy is of great value, as there are only a few copies available of this work.

Brazil

The Postmaster-General of Brazil announced at a luncheon given in his honour by a group of pastors in Rio de Janerio, that he intends to issue a special postage stamp to commemorate Bible Sunday in Brazil on 9th December. The design of the stamp will reproduce a poster published by the *Brazil Bible Society* at the time of its inauguration as a full member of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, in 1948. This poster shows an outline of Brazil in the centre, with two hands holding a Bible above it and the words " Dando a Biblia a Patria " (Giving the Bible to the homeland) printed below.

Burma

The following paragraphs are extracted from the last circular letter sent out by the Rev. H. C. Willans, agent of the B.F.B.S. in Rangoon :—

" We had a happy celebration at the Bible House one day in March. It was to mark the completion of the New Testament in Laizo Chin, another addition to the Society's language list. We had been working on it for a whole year, with the help of two Chin students to revise the manuscript and

standardise the spelling. Then there were the proofs to read, and hardly a week passed without our spending many hours on this Testament. At last, the final proof was passed, the printing completed and a thousand copies bound and despatched. We held a tea party to mark the occasion ; the Chin students read passages from the printed book which they had done so much to prepare, and we asked for the blessing of God on this new version of the Scriptures.

" The books would reach Falam in the Chin Hills in good time before the rains broke. We sent them off by lorry, a five-hundred mile journey by road to Monywa ; from there they went by air to Kalemyo, then eighty miles more by lorry and a final stage of several days on mule back to Falam. It may be months before we hear of their arrival, for the airfield at Kalemyo is not used in the rains, and once the monsoon has broken communication with the Chin Hills is very difficult. But we have every reason to believe the books got through in time, and we confess to a little pride in winning this race with time and weather.

" We had a similar race with the Lisu New Testament (see BULLETIN No. 7, p. 6), but this time we failed. In a previous circular we mentioned that an edition of the New Testament and Psalms in Lisu was being printed in Hongkong. Many of the Lisu people live in the far north of Burma and we asked for the books to be shipped to us in time for distribution before the rains. A shipment of 5,000 copies reached Rangoon port on 22nd March and we sent messages to the missionaries in the north so that they could get their porters ready. Some of the books were for places 30 days' march beyond Myitkyina, and they had been specially packed in fifty-pound loads convenient for men to carry.

" We hoped to clear the shipment through Customs quickly, and send the boxes off that same week. Alas for our hopes ! the Lisu books were cleared through Customs quickly enough, but then the Security Police clamped down on them, suspicious these days of any literature coming from China. There was nobody in Rangoon who knew Lisu and the books were held up for weeks. It was not until a missionary came down from Putao bringing a Lisu youth that we made any progress.

" It was mid-May before the books were finally released, after seven weeks of tantalising delay. The boxes are on their way north now, but most of the Lisu Christians will have to wait until the rains are over for their copy of the New Testament.

" Just now, we are printing Gospels in two other Chin languages. In one of them, Asho Chin, the translator had the great disappointment of having his manuscript destroyed by white ants. He took this blow in a very fine spirit and wrote to us, ' now it seems to me that it is God's will that a new version be made with the meaning clearer, the interpretation easier and hearing more attractive. I hope to make a better translation.' He is a busy teacher but promised to give an hour a day to it. During the school holidays he was able to give more time, and now he has sent us the MSS of both St. Matthew and St. Mark. The other language, Zotung Chin, is spoken by about 7,000 people in the Haka section of the Chin Hills. Until recently they have not responded much to Christian preaching, but lately there has been something of a mass movement and about 500 of them have already been baptised. No missionary knows their language, but a Chin teacher from Haka has learned it and made a translation of St. Matthew's Gospel. This will be the first book in Zotung and it adds another new language to our list. The cost of printing it is being met by gifts from a Bible Class in Toronto."

China

On the recommendation of Shanghai, the work of the Bible Society in Hongkong is now administered independently by the British and Foreign Bible Society in collaboration with the American Bible Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland.

England

The United Evangelical Exhibition and Campaign " For such a time as this," organised by the World's Evangelical Alliance (see BULLETIN No. 7, pp. 8-9) during the first three weeks of September and which was centred in the Bible, has had a constant flow of visitors. Her Majesty the Queen sent a message of good wishes for the opening of the Exhibition, in which she underlined the rôle played by the Bible in moulding the life of the British nation. " I can truly say," the Queen adds, " that the King and I long to see the Bible back where it ought to be as a guide and comfort in the homes and lives of our people. From our own experience, we know what the Bible can mean for personal life."

The *British and Foreign Bible Society* had a large stand at that Exhibition, showing not only the present work of the Society, but also a number of ' famous Scriptures ' in several languages.

*

8,430,229 copies of Scripture were circulated by the Scripture Gift Mission during its last year of activity ending March, 1951. Included in the total are : 50,615 Bibles, 94,337 New Testaments, 1,270,718 Gospels or complete books of the Bible, 2,952,296 booklets with selected readings of the Scriptures, 4,062,263 Bible portions (short extracts and text cards). These Scriptures were distributed in 178 countries and islands and in 226 languages.

During the year under review, the S.G.M. has published booklets of selected passages (The Way of Salvation) in two languages, Dai and Kablai (French Equatorial Africa), into which no text of the Bible had ever been translated, bringing to 50 the number of languages in which the S.G.M. has ' pioneered ' with the publication of passages of Scripture. During the same year, the S.G.M. has added five new languages to its list in which Scriptures have already been published by other Societies. These are :

The Way of Salvation in Tang Khul (Assam and Burma)
Words of Wisdom in Dhupadhola (or Dama) (Uganda)
The Way of Salvation in the Padang dialect of Diaka (Anglo-Egyptian Sudan)
Christian Law and Liberty in Rennel
A leaflet in Low Malay (Borneo)

*

The B.F.B.S. has loaned from its library three historical Bibles—the Coverdale Bible, the first printed English Bible, the Geneva Bible (1560) and the Authorised Version (1611)—for use in an exhibition of English books to be held in Paris, under the auspices of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

*

The first New Testament in Moru (Southern Sudan) is being printed by the B.F.B.S. for the Hibernian Bible Society, which raised a special subscription for that New Testament, the translation of which has been made by an Irish lady, the late Mrs. C. F. Fraser. This Testament is urgently needed to strengthen the Church against the increasing pressure of Islam. The Moru tribe numbers approximately 460,000 people, of which over 15,000 are Christians and 8,000 literate.

*

Discussions have been taking place between the British & Foreign Bible Society and a group of well-known scholars on the possibility of publishing a new edition of the Old Latin Old Testament. This is the Latin version (or versions) which existed before St. Jerome prepared the Vulgate in the fourth century. It survives in fragments only of its different recensions, which present such complex variations that some scholars believe them to proceed from separate original sources. The last edition was brought out in Rheims in 1749 by Pierre Sabatier, a Benedictine scholar, and published together with the Vulgate text. Strangely enough it remains the only full collection of quotations from and fragments of Old Latin versions of the Old and New Testaments, although a rich abundance of material has come to light since Sabatier's day. Its special value lies in its collection of Patristic quotations from the Old Latin, and fragments of MSS, many of them in Paris.

The ceaseless quest for the original text of the Bible gives the Old Latin version importance as supplementing the Hebrew and Greek MSS on which the various translations rest. For the Old Testament particularly, it would provide a check on the Hebrew and Septuagint versions.

A committee is being formed, and includes Professor G. R. Driver, Fellow of Magdalen, an authority on the Semitic and other language groups; Dr. A. V. Billen, Speaker's Lecturer on Biblical Studies in the University of Oxford; Professor Sparks of Birmingham University; and the Rev. A. W. Adams, Dean of Divinity of Magdalen.

The new publication will appear in three volumes and will be issued by the B.F.B.S. The first volume, consisting of the Hexateuch, will probably be ready for the press in three years. Dr. Billen is responsible for this section. The Rev. A. W. Adams hopes to have the Historical Books ready by the time volume one leaves the press. Professor Sparks thinks it may be fifteen years before the third volume will be completed.

Formosa

The island of Formosa, or Taiwan as the Chinese call it, was under Japanese rule from 1895 until 1945. The Japanese authorities refused to permit the evangelisation of the aborigines of the island. All that could be done was to persuade a few of them to enter the Canadian Mission Bible School at Tamsui in the hope that they might return to evangelise their own people, but, in view of the fierce spirit of Japanese nationalism which prevailed before the war, this was but a slender chance. When, however, the missionaries were able to return to the island after the second world war, they discovered a quite unexpected movement had taken root among the aborigines of the island, hitherto almost untouched by Christianity. Through the devotion and teaching of a handful of Christian aborigines and in spite of Japanese persecution, a church of over 7,000 strong had grown up secretly in the mountains.

Translation work on the Scriptures into the languages spoken by these tribes was begun immediately, and the B.F.B.S. has just printed in Hongkong for shipment to Formosa 3,000 copies of St. Matthew's Gospel in the Bunun tongue. Bunun is the first tribal language of Formosa to be reduced to writing, and this is the first book they will have in their own tongue. Hitherto the Bibles used in the island have been Japanese or Chinese.

France

During this summer the Bible van belonging to the *French Bible Committee* spent nearly a month, visiting the resorts of the Côte d'Azur. In Nice several representatives of several evangelical churches and movements had

agreed to take turns in supporting the work of the colporteurs by their presence. The van drew the curiosity of the numerous holiday-makers frequenting the Côte d'Azur. The colporteurs had many visitors during the evenings and often kept their stand open until nearly midnight. During this period they sold 69 Bibles, 34 New Testaments, 222 illustrated Gospels in magazine format and some 50 other portions of the Bible.

*

Having decided to give their leisure time to distributing the Word of God, a French couple from Nîmes have had a small car specially adapted for visiting the fairs, markets and villages of their area during their free time. Thus during the course of the last six months, they have succeeded in placing 1,500 New Testaments, 3,500 Gospels and in distributing more than 26,000 tracts.

Germany

The *Stuttgart Bible Society* has begun to issue its 'Jubilee Bible'—an edition of the Bible with notes and comments—in separate portions for special use in Bible Weeks and Bible study groups.

*

For the first time since the end of the war the Stuttgart Bible Society has again produced the cheap Stuttgart 'Volksbibel' in a new clear type which is very easy to read.

*

The first part of the plans of the Stuttgart Bible Society to produce a picture Bible with quite new coloured illustrations by the German artist Rudolf Schäfer, has now been realised; three volumes of the New Testament are now available. This is not by any means a complete Bible, but the corresponding Bible text is printed opposite the illustrations by Schäfer.

*

The Stuttgart Bible Society has just printed the second edition of a book written by a believing archaeologist, entitled 'The Transmission of the Bible in Print and Manuscript.' This second edition takes account of the important recent manuscript discoveries near the Dead Sea.

*

The *Union of Evangelical Bible Societies in Germany* held its annual meeting in Berlin in July. This gathering was attended by representatives of twenty German Bible Societies, some from the German Democratic Republic and some from the Federal Republic. The Rev. Dr. G. Darlington, Treasurer of the American Bible Society, was also present at this meeting, together with the General Secretary of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES.

Reports were given on the activity of the past year. It was stated that thanks to the help given by the B.F.B.S. and by the A.B.S. in sending large quantities of Scriptures into western Germany, and thanks to the increase in home production, the needs of the refugees had been more or less covered. There is, however, still a certain demand for Bibles free of charge or at a reduced price which the regional Bible Societies or the local churches should be able to meet.

The Bible Societies of Western Germany felt that they had a responsibility to help in supplying Scriptures for the D.D.R. (German Democratic Republic). During the year the *Verband* had sent 4,457 Bibles, 1,795 New Testaments and 7,269 Portions, 500 Nestlé Greek New Testaments and 24 copies of the Septuagint to Bible Societies and individuals in the D.D.R. Furthermore, several regional Bible Societies had made special grants to Bible Societies in the east, amounting to several thousand marks.

The Stuttgart Society reported that the setting up of the Old Testament in the Bali language (Cameroons, West Africa) has been started and the *Bergische Bible Society* gave an account of discussions with the Netherlands Bible Society for co-operation in the publication of editions of the Scriptures for Indonesia. Some time was given to discussing these developments, and each Society was urged to consider what steps it might be able to take in a similar direction in order to assume an active and responsible share in the world-wide activity of the Bible Societies.

The decision was also taken to publish an information bulletin three times a year, to be used in the Federal Republic only. It was left to the Bible Societies in the D.D.R. to decide whether similar action should be taken in their area.

Pastor Fisch, the travelling secretary, reported on his activity in the western and eastern zones of Germany, where in nine months he had addressed more than 200 meetings attended by about 20,000 people. He stressed the keen interest for Bible Society work which he had met everywhere and the need for small exhibitions showing the work of the Bible Societies. Contacts had been made with the work of the Inner Mission in order to develop interest in the churches for the Bible and the Bible Societies, and this matter is to be followed up by the Chairman of the *Verband*.

Besides discussing various points of an administrative nature, much time was devoted to the problem of the revision of the Luther text on which an article is included in this issue of the BULLETIN.

*

The *Altenburg Bible Society* has published an edition of 130,000 illustrated Gospels of St. Luke. This publication has received a warm welcome from the public and has been commended in both the religious and secular press. The Altenburg Society is now preparing an edition of the Acts of the Apostles.

*

The *Berlin Bible Society* has just brought an edition of 20,000 copies of the Zürich Bible through the press, which has been printed with the authorisation of the church in the Canton of Zürich (Switzerland). This Bible is a German translation made by a group of scholars between 1907 and 1931 and is in great demand, particularly by students and by leaders of Bible study groups, because of its accuracy and its exactitude.

*

The Gospel of St. Matthew in Low German (see BULLETIN No. 5, p. 24) is now ready for the press. The Gospel of John is to be the next book to be printed.

*

The Bible exhibition which was organised on the occasion of the 'Kirchentag' (Church Day) in Berlin (see BULLETIN No. 7, p.11), met with the greatest interest. Thousands of people listened to the explanations given by the stewards and staff of the Berlin and other Societies on the history of the Bible, the work of the Bible Societies, the problems of translation, the world-wide task of the Bible Societies and the U.B.S.

*

"Back to the Word" is the motto of a house visitation service started in the Province of Saxony (Eastern Germany) in 1948 by six laymen who were convinced of the urgent necessity to call and help people in the Church back to the Bible. The group of volunteers is now over an hundred from all professions. The particular stress of this missionary action lies in the method of visiting systematically, two by two, every home in a parish listed by the

pastor, and in calling on responsible laymen of the parish to continue the work thus started. In these talks and conversations between one layman and another many have found their way back to the regular reading of the Scriptures and to active participation in the life of the Church.

*

Chaplaincy work in prisons in the D.D.R. (German Democratic Republic) has enlarged considerably of late. Services are being held in increasing numbers and thousands of Bibles and hymnbooks have been distributed to prisoners.

Greece

Dr. Gilbert Darlington, represented the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society at the celebration of the 1900th anniversary of the arrival of St. Paul in Greece. In a note on this visit, Dr. Darlington writes :

" To assist in the celebration, the British and Foreign Bible Society supplied copies of the Acts in Ancient and in Modern Greek and the American Bible Society brought out the special illustrated edition of the Acts, showing many of the places visited by St. Paul. On the S.S. Aegaeon, that carried the members of this pilgrimage, there were also in active use copies of the Ancient Greek Testament published by the American Bible Society during the Second World War and copies of the Modern Greek New Testament, similar to the 200,000 donated by the American Bible Society to the Greek Armed Forces since the war. A motion picture, showing the distribution of these 200,000 Modern Greek New Testaments donated by the American Bible Society and of the 50,000 Ancient Greek New Testaments donated by the British and Foreign Bible Society to the Greek Armed Forces, was shown during the cruise by the writer. This motion picture, which was produced under the supervision of General James A. van Fleet, included also distribution of Modern Greek New Testaments to the thousand Greek soldiers who sailed for Korea as soon as the war there started."

Guatemala

Mr. Ralph Rice, senior colporteur in Guatemala, has given lectures in various Bible institutes in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, teaching the students the way and art of circulating the Scriptures.

*

The campaign against illiteracy in Guatemala has had good success amongst groups of natives. During the year 1950, more than 400 new readers gained the prize and received a New Testament with references and ordinary type.

Hungary

From the beginning of June to the middle of July, five one week postgraduate training courses were conducted for the pastors of the Transtibiscan Synod (Debrecen). During these weeks, 186 pastors, in five successive groups, attended the training courses devoting their time first of all to the study of the Bible, in a brotherly fellowship, and then to the study of theology.

Israel

On 10th July the B.F.B.S. opened in Haifa its first Bible depôt in the state of Israel. The ceremony took place in the presence of representatives of various churches and missions in Israel.

*

In an address delivered at the last annual meeting of the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, Mr. H. Newmark who had been touring Israel recently, gave the following information about the need for Scriptures :

" Israel are doing physical miracles without doubt, but there is no breath in them. We await the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to His own word, when God's Holy Spirit will be poured out upon them and then they will live. Meanwhile, they just exist. But in spite of the apparent indifference to spiritual things, they are, after all, empty human beings with hungry, unsatisfied hearts, and, therefore, when someone comes with the message of the Gospel, they are at least glad to purchase the Scriptures. The demand for Bibles is greater than the supply and they want whole Bibles. They are not satisfied with Old Testaments. Whether in Hebrew or in their own language, they want a complete Bible. That is a wonderful sign of the times. So please pray for all those who have got the Bibles and Testaments, and pray that there may be an increase in supplies in spite of paper difficulties, so that all those Jews who would like a Bible may have one."

Japan

There are now 150 colporteurs working for the *Japan Bible Society*, helped by about 500 local workers. The Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A. and the Christian Women's Temperance League are promoting the organisation of Bible study groups among students, in factories, in shops, in dormitories for repatriates or war-widows and co-operate closely with the colporteurs. Most of the local churches are also taking a share in the distribution of the Scriptures and church authorities are active in organising colportage work in their districts. Thus very close co-operation exists between the Bible Society and the various Christian organisations in Japan.

Korea

An American chaplain ministering to North Korean prisoners-of-war has written as follows to the headquarters of the American Bible Society in New York, commenting on the frame of mind characteristic of these prisoners :

" They are ready to listen, and we have something to give them in the Scriptures. With that in mind, you will be glad to hear, I know, that we have started a Bible institute here. When it was first announced we had 400 applicants, but because of lack of space a series of elimination examinations were given, to bring the number down to 38. Since then we have opened eleven more, with a total of over 250 students. The curriculum is Matthew, Acts, hymns, English and physical training. The sessions begin at 7.0 a.m. and continue until 11 a.m. We have now 822 enrolled in the Bible correspondence course.

" Now, all these fellows are deeply grateful to the Bible Society for the gift of Scriptures. We do not have New Testaments enough to go round ; we give 50 or more copies to each church, and the members go to the church to read them. Old Testaments, of course, are precious beyond words. In one compound of 10,000 men, with about 200 Christians or more, we had one Old Testament—that is, one whole Bible with the Old Testament. Quite a few copies of the four Gospels and Acts have been coming through from you, but I hope we can get a supply of Old Testaments before long."

Netherlands

Since 1950, the institute ' Kerk en Wereld ' (Church and World), specialising in the training of the laity for church and evangelistic work, has issued

a new type of Bible commentary intended for outsiders who are ignorant of everything about the Bible. These commentaries are written in every-day language and include the reactions and comments of the average person of to-day on reading the Bible for the first time. Answers and explanations are then given for these reactions.

*

For many years now, the most outstanding scholars of the Old and New Testaments have been working on behalf of the *Netherlands Bible Society* on a new translation, which can claim to be officially recognised by all the Protestant churches and thus take the place of the translation of 1637, which was made on the orders of the Dordrecht Synod of 1618-1619. The New Testament was available as early as 1940 and is already in great use. Now the translation of the Old Testament has also been completed, and it was a ceremonial moment when, at the annual meeting of the Bible Society on 21st June in Amsterdam, the manuscript could be handed over to the main committee. It is hoped that the whole of the new translation will be published next year. Then for some time, opportunity will be given to the churches and to scholars to make their comments and to suggest improvements. These will then be considered by the revision committee before the translation is given its final form. It has become apparent that the translation committee still has an important task as adviser for Bible translators on the mission field.

*

The Netherlands Bible Society reports that since the end of the war, over 600,000 copies of the Scriptures have been sent from Holland to Indonesia of which over 445,000 since 1st January, 1950. 18,630 complete Bibles, 94,300 Old Testaments, 162,398 New Testaments are included in this total.

New Zealand

The proof-reading of the newly revised Maori Bible has just been completed by the Very Rev. and Mrs. J. G. Laughton, who travelled to England specially for this purpose and have been engaged on this task for the past fifteen months. Mr. Laughton has been a member of the committee of twelve (ten of whom were members of the Maori race) which was responsible for this revision. The first complete Maori Bible in one volume was printed in 1868, although all the books of the Bible had already been printed separately at various times. The first revision appeared in 1887 and remained the standard version until 1924 when a further revision was completed and published. 4,000 copies of this version were printed, and when it became necessary to consider reprinting the Maori Bible, it was decided that a further revision should take place which would eliminate the many typographical errors that had marred the 1924 version.

Amongst other things the revision committee decided that steps should be taken to raise £3,000 as the contribution of the Maori people to the expenses required for the revision and publication of the Maori Bible. Over £4,000 were provided by the Maoris for this purpose.

Trieste

There are still about 6,000 refugees in Trieste. Pastor Charles Grikman, a Latvian pastor working among refugees in Belgium, has paid two visits this year to Trieste, where he has distributed large numbers of Scriptures in many languages. Pastor Grikman reports a great desire for the Word of God among these D.Ps.

United States of America

The Board of the *American Bible Society* has authorised the publication of new editions of the Scriptures in various languages, including: Chol, Huichol, Mazateco, Eastern Otomi, Central Otomi, Tarahumara, Tlapaneco, Tojolabal, Trique, Tarascan, Tzeltal, Ostoacan dialect of Zoque, Bassa, Gbeapo, Gio and Shilluk.

*

Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon on two records, Jeremiah on eight records and Lamentations on one record, have been issued by the A.B.S. in the new ten-inch Talking Book records for the blind in English.

*

The first edition of the Gospel of Luke in Portuguese braille (see BULLETIN No. 7, p. 18) is already exhausted and a second edition is now in the press.

*

The American Bible Society is printing a new edition of the Bible in English braille, grade 2, in the King James version which will be complete in 18 volumes. The Old Testament is in 14 volumes and the New Testament in 4. Copies of this new edition of the Bible will be ready for distribution to the blind in early November.

*

A report on distribution in the United States for the first quarter of 1951 showed a total of 2,918,802 volumes, as compared with a distribution of 1,294,418 volumes for the same period of 1950.

A statement on distribution to the blind for the first quarter of 1951 showed a total of 7,336 volumes, and Talking Book records as compared with 6,187 copies for the same period of 1950.

*

On the recommendation of the Advisory Council in November, 1950, the Constitution of the American Bible Society was amended at the annual meeting of the Society last May, to permit the circulation by the Society of the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament (first issued by Thomas Nelson and Sons in 1946), as well as the King James' Version and the revisions of 1881-1885 and of 1901.

*

Mr. Henry H. Ragatz, convener of the Audio-Visual Functional Group of the United Bible Societies and secretary of the Visual-Materials Department of the A.B.S., announces the completion of a new sound film '. . . . the whole armour . . . .'

This 16mm film is in colour (except for official military scenes). It will run approximately 20 minutes. The subject matter covers the work of the A.B.S. in providing Scriptures for the Armed Forces. This work was started in 1820. The Society has distributed in these years more than 33,000,000 copies of the Scriptures for this one type of work. Various agencies in the Armed Forces of the U.S. Government aided the Bible Society in securing authentic scenes for its film.

*

Arrangements for a first printing of almost one million volumes of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, with a retail value of more than $5 million, were announced recently by Thomas Nelson & Sons, the publishers. This is the largest initial printing ever ordered for a full-sized volume. Manu-

facture of this edition, scheduled for publication in September, 1952, will require more than 1,000 tons of paper, 16,670 pounds of ink, 71½ miles of cloth, 18,750,000 yards of thread, and 140 tons of binding board. If stacked in one pile, the completed Bibles would tower 24 miles into the stratosphere.

*

A lecturer in one of the American universities draws attention in the "Christian Century" to the serious consequences which will result from the elimination of Bible lectures from the timetable of many American high-schools. It is well known that these institutions in the United States are to a large extent financed privately and from church quarters, and it is becoming ever more difficult to provide the necessary means, whereas those universities which are financed by the State have an assured income at their disposal. In order to cut down expense, the Bible lectures in many colleges are in the hands of quite incompetent teachers ; for instance, a lecturer in philosophy or English language, or occasionally a local pastor, has the responsibility for the theological lectures to the whole of the student body. By this means, according to the report in " Christian Century," the university authorities use the opportunity, under cover of economy measures, of dismissing lecturers whose subject is regarded as unimportant.

United Bible Societies

A report on the distribution of the U.B.S. quarterly THE BIBLE TRANSLATOR drawn up in June, shows that copies of this publication are sent out as follows :

Bible translators	532
Subscribers...	169
In bulk to member Societies of the U.B.S. ...	759
To libraries and colleges	415
Free copies to addresses forwarded by member Bible Societies	1,061
Church periodicals	30

Of the April, 1951 issue, 392 copies went to addresses in Africa, 151 to India, Pakistan and Ceylon, 168 to China, 160 to other parts of Asia and 125 to Central and South America.

*

The General Secretary attended the last meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches as U.B.S. fraternal delegate. Bringing the greetings of the Standing Committee of the U.B.S., he took this opportunity to express the deep concern of the Bible Societies regarding the place which the Bible must have in the evangelistic activity of the Church. He also referred to the financial problems which the Bible Societies are having to face in view of the tremendous rise in production costs of Scriptures, and expressed the hope that the churches will give all possible support to the Bible Societies, especially in such countries, where the Bible Society was formerly only concerned with work in its own country and has now undertaken to assume responsibility for other areas of the world as well.

Roman Catholicsm

Austria : The Bible Apostolate in Klosterneuberg (see BULLETIN No. 6, p. 27) has printed an edition of the New Testament, copies of which are available very cheaply at 6.50 schillings for direct distribution among the people, by eliminating intermediary transactions.

Literacy

From a limited survey on the progress of literacy made in an area of Nigeria where Hausa is spoken, the following conclusions are drawn by the senior Adult Education Officer, and they would seem to be valid for other single language groups in so far as *adult males* are concerned :

Of the adult male population (from 16 onwards—teaching had been compulsory for all men from 15 to 30, voluntary for the older men)—

" 60% were able and willing to learn

50% succeeded in learning—this is the optimum

About 60 1-hour lessons are required to obtain literacy by 70% of those becoming literate. In this particular case where attendance was 60% for 2 lessons a week, a year was required.

Two years after passing the Certificate 90% were lapsing in writing and 25% in reading.

" It is suggested that the first two points above are true of any people. It therefore follows that if in a village 50% of the adult males are literate, then under present circumstances the maximum has been obtained. Therefore in the conduct of an adult literacy campaign, it is desirable that careful record should be kept for each village, and when the percentage acquiring literacy has reached 50% then it is time to move on.

" The relapse in writing is not of great importance, as I regard the learning of writing as an aid to reading in the first instance. Relapse in reading is another matter. The Christian missions keep alive the skill of reading in the course of religious worship. For Mohammedans and pagans this is a special problem. A profusion of public notices and literature might be the solution."

Another survey was made in the Tiv region, where attendance at lessons was voluntary ; the percentage of people who enrolled was only about 50% and only about 40% of the male population became literate. However, better individual performances were noted.

Miscellaneous

The Study Department of the World Council of Churches has announced that an ecumenical symposium on ' The Biblical Authority for the Church's Social and Political Message,' edited by Canon Alan Richardson of Britain and Dr. Wolfgang Schweitzer of the Study Department staff, has been completed, and will be published in the autumn of this year by the S.C.M. Press, London.

*

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting at Rolle (4th—11th August) decided on :

The Crucified Lord, the Hope of the World or

The Crucified and Risen Lord, the Hope of the World

as alternatively possible provisional titles for the Assembly of the W.C.C. to be held in the United States of America in 1954. The final decision is to be taken at the next meeting of the Central Committee.

One section of the Assembly will be devoted to the question of evangelism.

■

The annual income per head of the population, according to a report prepared by the Secretaries of the United Nations, is approximately $1,100 in North America, $560 in Oceania, $380 in Europe, $310 in the U.S.S.R., $170 in South America, $75 in Africa, and $50 in Asia.

THE NANCY CONFERENCE

ARTHUR L. HAIG

THE Regional Conference of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES in Nancy took place under very pleasant circumstances. We were in the first place warmly welcomed by the local group of friends who had done all they could to care for our comfort and make us feel at home. Some of us had the pleasure and privilege of enjoying the warm hospitality of French homes. Nancy is the capital city of Lorraine, and the many beautiful buildings and churches brought home to us what an interesting and historic city we were visiting.

The conference was appropriately held in the French language and half of the 70 delegates were French. In addition to a large contingent of pastors and others from the Reformed and Lutheran churches, there were also representatives from the Methodists, Baptists, Salvation Army, Adventists and Mennonites. The Société Biblique de France and the Société Biblique Protestante de Paris had sent their representatives, and certain other organisations were also represented. A strong delegation from Belgium, including the Secretary of the Belgian Bible Society took part and Bible Society representatives from Germany, Holland, Great Britain, Austria, Italy, North Africa and South Africa were present. Most of the delegates arrived on the evening of the 25th September and there was an evening session when they were introduced and welcomed.

Each morning session was opened with Bible reading and prayer, and we remember with gratitude the inspiration received through those who led us into the presence of God.

The subject for discussion on the first morning (Wednesday) was "The Bible—a means of evangelisation." This was opened by a helpful address from Pastor Descamps of the Belgian Methodist Church, who indicated a number of examples and personal experiences illustrating his subject. An energetic discussion followed, when it was made clear that not only was the Bible essential for evangelisation, but that in many cases people are brought to a saving knowledge of Christ simply through the reading of the Scriptures. Some very interesting examples of the power of the Word of God in human lives were given.

In the afternoon we gathered again in our conference hall at 2.30 p.m. to consider the subject of "How to circulate the Bible." This was ably introduced by Monsieur René Cruse, who is actually engaged in colportage in the Nancy region. The question he threw out as to whether it was easier to contact people in the street or in their homes was eagerly taken up and discussed. Colportage from door to door, in fairs and markets, by motor-van, through exhibitions and in other ways was considered from every angle by a number of delegates who were able to speak from experience, and doubtless some of those present were able to get some new ideas for their particular fields.

The evening session was presided over by Pastor Michaeli, delegate of "La Bible jour après jour." He first introduced the Rev. G. R. Miegge of Rome, who gave us in ten minutes a racy description of the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Italy. After referring to the difficulties of the situation, he emphasised the importance of the work being carried out by the 147 voluntary colporteurs scattered in all parts of the country. There has been consequently a considerable increase of circulation. The second

speaker was Baron van Tuyll, General Secretary of the Netherlands Bible Society. He gave us an interesting glimpse of the work being carried on, more particularly in Indonesia. We were then shown two films. The first one was introduced by the Rev. James Roe, Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society in North Africa. This film was taken by Mr. Roe and gave a most realistic picture of colportage in that region. The second film, kindly lent by the National Bible Society of Scotland, gave a more general picture of the essential work carried on by a Bible Society. Finally the Rev. W. J. Platt summed up simply but clearly the need of the world to-day, and brought forcibly to the consciences of his hearers the part that they should be playing in the work of sending out the Gospel to all men.

On the second day, the conference was presided over by the Rev. W. J. Platt. At 9.30 a.m. the subject for discussion " How to present the Bible " was introduced by Monsieur J. Blumenthal in a most thorough manner. After a short glimpse at the past as it had reference to the subject, Mr. Blumenthal spoke of what was needed to-day, both for church members and also for the man in the street. He referred in detail to such matters as the text of Scripture, the question of introductions, notes, illustrations, etc., as well as questions of printing and binding. He also raised the question of extracts. Mr. Blumenthal was followed by Colonel Bertrand-Vigne, the Secretary of the Société Biblique de France. Pastor Laroche then gave us an historical review of translation and revision work, especially in reference to French versions. The subject was then thrown open to discussion, and a number of speakers debated the advantages or otherwise of including the Apocrypha in Bible editions. It became clear that there was no common mind on this problem. Some time was given to questions of text, and there were a number of suggestions in regard to the binding and general appearance of books. In the afternoon there was no session and many delegates took the opportunity afforded them of seeing something of the surrounding towns and country.

In the evening a public meeting was held in the Salle Poirel, when Pastor Marc Boegner gave a masterly address entitled " The Bible, the power of God." The large hall was well filled and a quantity of Bibles and other literature was sold from the bookstall at the entrance.

Pastor Marc Boegner presided on the third day. The subject for discussion " The Bible movement in the Roman Catholic Church " was introduced by Pastor Harts of the Belgian Bible Society, in a most able review of the situation. The reasons for this new movement, what was being done and the implications for the Bible Societies were clearly shown. There was, however, not a great deal of discussion on this subject ; it is possible that the whole question was new to a good many delegates. Mr. Blumenthal took the opportunity of making a warm appeal to the churches for much greater support in the vital work of the Bible Societies ; little was being done in France at present. There was also more discussion on the work of colporteurs and of the need for their instruction.

In the afternoon the closing session took place, when the various resolutions decided on by the Resolutions Committee were put to the conference. Let me say here that when attending this Committee on Thursday afternoon I was impressed by the deep interest and concern shown by the pastors and other members in the work of the Bible Societies. It was very evident that the conference had led to much thought. The resolutions passed are reproduced below. It was not intended that they should sum up all the discussions, but rather that they should indicate the lines along which, in

the view of those attending the conference, thoughts and actions should be directed in the future.

The future will show what effect this conference has had on the French and Belgian churches. Nevertheless, there was undoubtedly a very happy spirit of fellowship among the delegates of many nationalities, and controversy was little in evidence. The writer feels confident that real progress has been made in drawing the churches and Bible Societies closer in their common task. Much credit is due to Monsieur Béguin, General Secretary of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, for all the hard work put into this by him and his staff for many months past. He not only presided on the first day, but was constantly at hand, helping and guiding in every possible way.

We shall not soon forget the closing Communion Service, when the delegates from ten nations and many churches led by Pastor Galland humbly gave thanks for the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ offered for us on the Cross. In the quiet of that service, our prayer was and is that we might be able to spread abroad ever more widely the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ.

NANCY RESOLUTIONS

I THE Regional Conference of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, meeting in Nancy (France) from 26th to 28th September, 1951 gives thanks to God for the spirit of fellowship which has constantly prevailed amongst the delegates of various nationalities and denominations who have gathered together for these three days with the same love for the Word of God and the same concern for the distribution in a de-christianised world of the Bible, which always meets human need and dissatisfaction and remains the only source of the Christian life and faith.

This Conference feels that it should convey to *all the churches* its conviction that responsibility for distributing the Bible does not only rest with the Bible Societies, but with every denomination, with every local church and with every believer,

And it asks them to associate themselves ever more closely with the work of the Bible Societies :

1. by organising, locally or regionally, evangelistic campaigns with colportage, talks, Bible exhibitions, etc., in direct collaboration with the Bible Societies ;
2. by observing Bible Sunday each year and by preparing this with care, so that it may represent a real effort on the part of all members of each local church ;
3. by supporting the Bible Societies financially with an annual collection organised by the authorities in each union of churches, so as to take part in the world-wide work of Bible distribution.

On the other hand, the Conference requests *the Bible Societies* to facilitate this collaboration with the churches by supplying them with more adequate information and documentation by all the necessary means : the press, tracts, talks in churches and in theological faculties, broadcast services, etc., etc.

II The Regional Conference of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES expresses the wish that the Bible Societies should take care to make their existence known in theological faculties, Bible schools and youth camps.

The Conference invites the Bible Societies to contact theological professors, and especially those responsible for teaching practical theology and to contact the students to whom they will endeavour to make known the work of colportage, even by engaging some students provisionally in this ministry.

III Convinced of the extreme importance of the ministry of Bible colportage, the Regional Conference of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES requests the churches and religious organisations to take particular care in the *training* of their colporteurs, and to take all the measures necessary for these to find, in the accomplishing of their ministry, the *spiritual support* which they need and which they have the right to expect from their churches.

IV The Regional Conference of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES expresses the wish that the various French-speaking colporteurs should come together for an annual retreat, at the expense of the Bible Societies, with a view to forming them into an united body, recognised and appreciated by the churches.

V The Regional Conference of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES requests that the Bible Societies should make use of exhibitions and the cinema in their propaganda programmes and that in particular they should prepare a film for 1954 on the history of the Bible and of the Bible Societies in three languages (English, French and German).

VI The Regional Conference of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES expresses the wish that a revaluation be made of the term ' colporteur ' by qualifying it, and that a Scriptural term be found which corresponds to this ministry of the Church.

VII The Regional Conference of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES expresses the wish that a study be made of the possibility of printing an edition of the New Testament or of a Gospel in which the passages concerning salvation would be underlined.

BIBLE WORK IN INDO-CHINA

VERY little is generally known about missionary work in Indo-China. The visit to London of the Rev. H. Curwen Smith, a Canadian missionary of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (U.S.A.) and the B.F.B.S. agent in that area, provided an excellent occasion for hearing something of the work of the Bible Society and more generally of the conditions which characterize the activity of Christian missions in Indo-China.

Mr. Curwen Smith also called in at the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES' office and kindly authorised me to reproduce in the BULLETIN part of our conversation.

O. B.

If I understand the situation rightly, was my first question, *Indo-China is now divided into three regions : Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos ?*

This is true politically, and these three regions being quite separate intend to have their own currency and postage stamps later on, but all three are, of course, in the French Union.

Linguistically, however, and as far as the Bible Societies' work is concerned there is a fourth region—the Tribal region, which covers the mountainous centres of the peninsula.,

Vietnam has an approximate population of 20 million, Cambodia 4½ million, Laos just over 1 million and the Tribal region at least another million. The Vietnamese are mostly of Chinese stock, while in Cambodia the people are a mixture of Indian and Indonesian. In Laos the population belongs to the Thai race and is of Mongolian origin.

But where does the Vietminh come in?

Actually the Vietminh affects only the eastern region of the peninsula, Vietnam, which is now governed by the former emperor Bao-Dai. Many of the leaders of the Vietminh are communists, but the strength of the movement lies mainly in its nationalism.

It is often said that the government of emperor Bao-Dai is just a puppet government; would you agree with that?

Oh no! Such a view does not correspond with reality. The Bao-Dai government is composed of some very capable men who have won for their people a degree of independence far beyond the original agreement with Ho Chi Minh.

I am afraid I know very little about Indo-China; what is the dominant religion there?

Cambodia is strongly Buddhist; Laos is likewise Buddhist except for the tribal groups who are animists. The Vietnamese combine an easy-going form of Buddhism with animism. The Roman Catholics claim about two million adherents among the Vietnamese, though they have had little success in Cambodia and Laos. Generally speaking, there is now little opposition to Protestant Missions.

One remarkable thing is the high rate of literacy in Indo-China. As far as I can judge, I would say that about 80% of the Vietnamese population is literate. The French always provided good schools and education was encouraged. The people are, on the whole, quick to learn, many of the students going on to universities. Formerly the teachers were French, but now they are being replaced by Vietnamese. The literacy rate in Cambodia and Laos is not so high as elsewhere.

I understand that the Christian and Missionary Alliance (Mission Evangélique de l'Indochine) is the only Protestant Mission at work in Indo-China. Why is this?

Apart from the Swiss Brethren who work in Southern Laos and a few Seventh Day Adventists in Southern Vietnam, the C. & M. A. is the only Protestant Mission working in Indo-China. The Treaty of 1884 between France and Annam restricted all missionary work to the Roman Catholics. This Treaty said nothing about Protestant work, therefore the French interpreted it as prohibiting them. This ban was lifted in 1929.

The Roman Catholic Church had set foot in the country toward the end of the 16th century, but no Protestant influence touched these regions until

1891, when a wandering French missionary, Mr. Hocquard, landed at Saigon with a supply of Scriptures, amongst them a Gospel of St. Luke in Annamese, translated by Professor Bonnet of the Paris School of Oriental Languages, and which had just come off the press.

Several attempts to establish missionary and Bible Society work in Indo-China failed because of Roman Catholic opposition and in 1900, by a decision of the governor, all missionary activity came to a standstill and the B.F.B.S. had to recall its three sub-agents.

The responsibility for Bible work in Indo-China was then transferred to the Paris agency of the B.F.B.S. and in 1902 the latter was successful in obtaining permission for a French colporteur to work in Annam (Central Vietnam). In the same year a mission station was opened in Laos . . . . .

Mr. Charles Bonnet, the French colporteur, worked until 1909 and when he left he asked the Christian and Missionary Alliance, with which he had been in contact, to take over his work. This the Mission did, then being able to develop its own work in certain areas.

So we can say, can we not, that to a large extent, the Church in Indo-China was born out of the activity of the Bible Society, and that the Bible Society opened the doors, as it were, for the work of the mission? What is now the strength of the Church in Indo-China and how is it organised?

The figures for 1950 were not available when I left Indo-China, but I would estimate that there are about 25,000 baptized Christians in all areas and probably as many more enquirers. There are approximately 160 native pastors and 100 evangelists, who have been prepared for their work in one of the six Bible schools. (These figures are probably too low, but I would rather err on that side.) In addition there are eighty missionaries at work, many of whom are still language students.

The pastors of the Vietnamese Church baptise their own members and a careful study is made of each candidate's life : how he has been and is living, what is his knowledge of spiritual matters, reports on his conduct, etc. The Committee before which the candidate has been brought then decides whether or not he, or she, is ready for baptism.

The Vietnamese Church in Indo-China is divided into three districts—North, Central and Southern Vietnam—and each district has its own synod. Once a year a general Church Council is held, to which each church centre sends its delegates.

The Church in Vietnam has shown itself zealous in sending the Gospel to the Tribal regions and has for several years supported some of its pastors who have gone as missionaries to such tribes as the Radé, Jorai and Koho.

You have been working for many years for the Bible Society ; what exactly is its activity in Indo-China now? How is it organized? Have you any colporteurs, or do the Churches look after the distribution of Scriptures?

There are two Depots—one in Hanoi and the other in Saigon—and a reading room at Haiphong. The latter is not, however, a Bible Depot. All these three are in the Vietnam field. On my return to Indo-China I expect to open a depot in Phnom-Penh, the capital of Cambodia. Each of the depots has a reading room where Scriptures in French, English, Vietnamese, etc., are placed. Many people who would not enter a church or speak to a pastor go to these rooms where they can sit reading as long as they wish. Usually,

there is a colporteur or worker available so that any questions can be answered. Many have been led to Christ in this way, becoming full members of His Church.

At the present time there are 27 colporteurs working throughout Indo-China. Of this number 14 are in Cambodia, 5 in Laos and 8 in Vietnamese territory. Due to the disturbed condition of the country for the past four years or more, systematic colportage has been greatly disrupted. During the past year, however, we have been gradually getting back to more normal activity. With the surrender of the Isaraks in Cambodia, bands of student colporteurs are once more engaged in the vital work of distributing the Word to their own people.

In the North Vietnam area the monthly distribution averaged 800 copies of Scripture portions for each man. The number in other sections where the population is sparse varies from 300 to 400 copies.

Most of the colporteurs work on a voluntary basis, retaining 90% of their sales and are supplied with funds for travelling expenses, where necessary. In cases where consistent monthly sales are maintained, the Society provides a bicycle.

What was your circulation last year? Have you had any difficulties in getting sufficent supplies? I don't suppose you are able to print on the spot, are you?

Our circulation last year amounted to:

Bibles: 1,824; New Testaments: 236; Portions: 13,235; total: 15,295. This is an increase of over 13,850 on the previous year's figures.

For the past two years we have had no difficulty in getting sufficient supplies. All Cambodian Gospels were printed in Phnom Penh, but very little is done in Indo-China itself. Most of our supplies have come from London and Shanghai and some now come from the Society's depot in Hongkong. Scriptures in two tribal languages have been printed in Canada. It has been found cheaper to have Scriptures printed abroad, but there is no difficulty at all in importing them into Indo-China.

I suppose you also have considerable activity in connection with translations?

Sixty tribal dialects are officially listed, but it is believed there may be twice that number. Up to the present, Gospels in five of these dialects have been translated. It is hoped to increase this number as the missionaries acquire new dialects. It is of the utmost importance that we give the Gospel to each large language group in its own tongue.

Actually the whole Bible exists in Vietnamese and in Thai Lao (Southern Laos). The entire Cambodian Bible has been translated and we expect to begin printing it in the near future. The Gospels of Mark and John in Jorai, and of John in Radé have been printed and are being circulated among the people.

You certainly have a big programme in front of you. I really do hope that you will soon find qualified translators for this work, men divinely inspired for the task. May I ask you one last question? You have already made mention of individual conversions through the reading of the Scriptures. Can you give one outstanding example of a church or community which has grown up solely from Bible reading?

Yes, here is a case! About 15 years ago, at a meeting we held in Haiphong, a man came in drunk. He fell asleep almost immediately at the back of the hall. At the end of the meeting he offered the pastor some money for being allowed to sleep under his roof out of the rain. The pastor said he could not take it unless the man took a New Testament in exchange. This he did, although for a long time he never bothered to read it. Now this man was a civil servant, and later he was transferred to an outpost in a region where the people spoke a different language. Having read the few books he possessed, he came across the New Testament which the pastor had given him and he decided to read it. The Holy Spirit worked on him and he was converted.

This was not the end, however: when the natives came to talk to him, he explained to them about the Book and they would talk about it together and he would teach them what he knew. Some time afterwards a missionary arrived at that place; he found a small church community there (some 8 or 9 people), all ready and asking for baptism!

It is true that such cases are rare and Bible evangelism does not generally lead to group conversion, not to mention mass conversion. But many peasants in Indo-China buy Scriptures at the markets, take them away to their homes, and when they have read a little—even if they cannot understand everything—they are at least prepared for the teaching of an evangelist or pastor. The ground is prepared, the Seed sown, and the Church comes and waters the plant and teaches.

THE THRILL OF BRAZIL

The Bible Society in a country of great possibility celebrates its third birthday.

CHARLES H. MORRIS

BRAZIL undoubtedly occupies one of the key positions of the modern world and this will become more apparent with the passing of the years. With its vast natural resources and its rapidly increasing population it is destined to become one of the leading powers of the universe. A land of wide open doors, widespread opportunities and a land whose potentiality involves the mind in attractive speculation. An enormous country which as late as 1850 boasted only eight million people and now has fifty-two million, a world-power size of population which is increasing at the approximate rate of one million per annum, dramatic growth indeed. It faces the Atlantic Ocean for 3,700 miles, from the River Oyapock which separates it from French Guiana in the north, to Uruguay in the south. Gigantic Brazil is so vast, and in some ways so mysterious, that it is unknown to the majority of its own people. It comprises nearly half the land mass of the whole of South America, with an area of over three million two hundred thousand square miles, it is the fourth in size amongst the nations, ranking after Russia, China and Canada and is sixty-five times the size of England. Some of its states are themselves larger than the majority of countries in the world; Amazonas for instance is more than five times as large as the British Isles including Eire.

In spite of the notable progress in many directions achieved during recent years particularly, the country is sometimes referred to even by her own

people as the ' Sleeping Giant ' because of its vast undeveloped hinterland and its reputed mineral resources which await exploitation. The fact that she has the attributes on which commerce depends and from which it is developed, puts Brazil in a prominent position on the list of desirables.

Rio de Janeiro, sitting almost astride the Tropic of Capricorn, is the capital of this land of to-morrow. The ' River of January ' proved to be a myth ; the large island-studded expanse of water into which the Portuguese navigators sailed on New Year's Day 1502 was not the mouth of a great river, but a bay. However, the city of Rio now occupies a magnificent position on its western shores, the beauty of city and harbour which are proverbial have been made famous in song and verse many decades before the tourist and publicity agents, with the aid of the super photographer, broadcast its charms. Rio is now said to be the best known three-letter word in world tourism.

It was in the superb setting of this beautiful city which enjoys almost perpetual summer, the metropolis of a potential world power, that the First General Assembly of the Bible Society of Brazil convened in June, on the occasion of the third anniversary of the organisation of the Society.

Rio is probably the only great city which, thanks to land regained from the sea, has an airport almost in the heart of its business section. The delegates to the General Assembly flew in here from almost every state of the Republic, from the banks of the Amazon and from the rolling cattle plains of the south, from the elevated plateau of Central Brazil, from the coastal towns along the north-eastern hump and from the industrial giant of Sao Paulo ; in fact, but for the quick travel assured by the air liner, many of the delegates could never have attended the Assembly. It is for instance 3,500 miles by river and sea from Manaus to Rio, a journey which takes three weeks or more by steamer, while from other states in the extreme north, twelve days or more are necessary to reach the capital by water, while it is impossible by road.

The delegates to the Assembly numbered forty-seven, pastors and laymen, the latter being lawyers, doctors, professors, journalists and men engaged in commerce and industry. From the moment when the President of the Society, Bishop Cesar Dacorso Filho, opened the proceedings with the reading of a passage of Scripture and prayer, there was an air of expectancy. The occasion was unique ; never before in this country had such a representative body gathered to carefully plan for the still greater distribution of the Scriptures in the land where the evangelicals are vigourously on the offensive. Throughout the two days of intense activity, all present at the various sessions were very conscious of a oneness of purpose and of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all the discussions, as also in the far-reaching decisions taken.

The President referred in his brief message to the Assembly to the most encouraging manner in which the Society was being increasingly supported by all denominational groups. The Reports given by the Executive and Co-operating Secretaries, the latter representing the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society, were listened to with intense interest and not a few of the delegates took copious notes.

The Rev. Ewaldo Alves gave a general report of what the Society had accomplished in three years ; three years of development and progress. He stressed the fact that the revision of the New Testament in Portuguese had just been completed and that the Society had now registered almost thirteen thousand members.

Detailed reports were given on production and distribution and finance. There was a tremor of excitement through the gathering when it was declared that in the three-year period of activity of the national Society, no fewer than 302,263 Bibles, 312,338 Testaments and 3,665,592 Portions, making a grand total of 4,280,193 volumes of Holy Writ had been put into the hands of the people in twenty-one different languages, the very great majority being in the mother tongue of Brazilians, Portuguese. It was also revealed that the cost of this gigantic work had exceeded fourteen million cruzeiros, of which just over one million had been donated in Brazil.

The Sub-Committee which examined the reports of the secretaries, closed its findings with these words :—

" In closing this analysis, we cannot do otherwise than suggest that this General Assembly record a vote of confidence, sympathy and thanks to the two co-operating Societies in London and New York, for the invaluable assistance they have been giving to the gigantic and blessed work in which the Bible Society of Brazil has been engaged through the vast territory of the Southern Cross."

As the extent and scope of the work became more patent to the delegates, there were repeated expressions of gratitude and praise for the exceedingly effective and exceptionally generous co-operation of the two co-operating Societies.

The new Board of Directors was elected by the Assembly ; it consists of twenty-four members representing eleven different denominations. Nineteen of the members are ministers and five are laymen ; twenty-two are Brazilian born and only two are foreigners, one Britisher and one American.

It was resolved unanimously to increase the selling prices of the majority of propaganda editions of the Scriptures, while various amendments to the Statutes and Bye-Laws of the Society were approved.

One of the most inspiring sessions was that in which the reports of the Regional Auxiliary Committees were presented. Nineteen of these Auxiliaries were represented, only one of the twenty organised was unable to send delegates. It was thrilling to listen to the report given by the president of the most northern Auxiliary, that which operates in the city of Manaus, capital of the state of Amazonas. In a special effort to secure more annual contributors for the Society the Auxiliary had decided to give a Pulpit Bible to the church enrolling the greatest number of new members for the Society, not necessarily church members. The first prize was won by the Presbyterian church which enrolled 87% of its members in the ranks of the Bible Society of Brazil ; in second place was the First Baptist church with an enrolment of 79%. The church registering the largest number of members for the Society, whether church members or not, was that of the Assemblies of God, who secured no fewer than 281 members. Organised in May, 1950 this Auxiliary had contributed to the funds of the Society Cr$18,631.00, approximately £365. The Auxiliary in Belem, at the mouth of the Amazon, had contributed £210, while the Auxiliary in Sao Luiz, further south, has sent £120 to the Bible House and is justly proud of having persuaded the Governor of the state to be a member of the Society, with an annual contribution of £10. In the southern town of Porto Alegre, over five hundred people have been registered as members of the Society, while from the energetic group in another southern town, Curitiba, we have received over £200. The Auxiliary in the capital of the inland state of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, presented a Bible to the

Governor of the state and has enrolled a considerable number of members, as also have the greater number of Auxiliaries throughout the country.

On the two evenings of the General Assembly and on the evening preceding it, special Bible Society services were held in three of the city churches, Baptist, Methodist and Assemblies of God respectively. Over two thousand five hundred people attended the last of these services and toward the close, when the hymn 'A Biblia' was sung, almost two thousand Bibles were held up at arms length by their respective owners. A demonstration not only of their love for God's Book, but of their intense desire to give it to their homeland in more abundant measure.

Such was the benediction to memorable days when men, more than ever, realised that there are few challenges equal to that which Brazil presents to the evangelical world of to-day, and were resolved to meet superb opportunity with renewed activity in order that the printed Word might truly thrill multitudes in Brazil.

THE MEXICO AGENCY COLPORTEURS' INSTITUTE

HAZAEL T. MARROQUIN

IT was my predecessor, the Rev. Arthur H. Mellen, who first had the vision of the value of holding annual or biennial meetings of the Bible Colporteurs working under the Mexico Agency of the American Bible Society. It was in December, 1921, when the first Colporteurs' Institute or conference was held. I had the privilege of helping to organise and direct the Institute, having been for a full year Mr. Mellen's assistant in the agency.

The number of our full-time Bible Colporteurs fluctuates ; we have had as many as thirty-two in our list ; but at the present time, they are twenty-three representing six evangelical denominations. Our plan is to have as many as thirty-five. About two-thirds of the colporteur's time is dedicated to the rural areas and one-third to the cities and towns in territory assigned to him by mutual agreement between the Agency Secretary and the officers of the ecclesiastical bodies backing him. About three-fourth's of each man's support comes from the Bible Agency on a full commission basis which is ruled by certain regulations, and the other one-fourth comes in cash from his ecclesiastical body.

The Bible colporteur is the travelling salesman of the greatest Book in the world, the Bible. He presents it to the greatest variety of people in their way of thinking, their beliefs, environments, prejudices, learnings, possessions, occupations, etc. The colporteur must know the Book he is distributing ; he must know the people to whom he is introducing it. Therefore, the better he is prepared for this very important work, the better results will he be able to obtain.

There are certain governing qualifications and principles which a Bible colporteur should have and apply if he is to accomplish satisfactorily his great and noble work :

First, he must be a Christian by conviction and by conversion, a man of faith and of prayer, full of the Holy Spirit and with a passion to rescue lost souls from sin, through the powerful Word of God.

Second, he must know how to explain and use his Bible in order to present it effectively to the people he contacts.

Third, he must be a good psychologist so he may present tactfully pertinent passages of Scripture to the person he is approaching.

Fourth, he must be courageous enough to testify in public and even in the midst of adverse circumstances about the saving power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Fifth, he must be very prudent, courteous, friendly, clean in his person, prompt in his appointments, honest and faithful in the accomplishment of his duties and in all his dealings.

Purpose of the Colporteurs' Institute : Briefly stating it, the main object is to bring the colporteurs together for a full week that they may know each other well : to establish close and friendly relations between the colporteurs themselves, and between the Agency Secretary and his colporteurs ; to give these Bible distributors a wider vision of their great work ; to give them information on administrative items ; to encourage them in preparing themselves for a better and more efficient service ; and to give them an opportunity of cultivating personal friendship and brotherly ties in Christ, respecting each other's evangelical denominations. The Institute, also, gives an opportunity to voluntary Christian lay workers of the area who may wish to attend and profit by the lectures and discussions. The Institute seeks to carry an inspiration to the local pastors and churches of the place where we meet. All this has been wonderfully accomplished in the past, in spite of the many limitations. Our aim is to make the Colporteurs' Institute an annual event and to hold it in a different place each year.

Programme Outlines : In the mornings we hold the study and sessions as follows : (*a*) Opening devotions ; (*b*) Bible studies : Analytical studies of a book or two of the Bible, Bible characters ; (*c*) Talks on How to Study the Bible, Personal Evangelism, etc. ; (*d*) Discussions on Methods of Scripture Canvassing, Present actual samples ; Notions on administrative items ; (*e*) Closing inspirational message. Of course, there is singing in between these numbers and a fifteen or twenty minute recess about mid-morning.

In the afternoons, actual Bible colportage work is done in the streets, market places, commercial houses, offices, and in the homes of the community as systematically as possible, avoiding duplication and omissions ; the colporteurs go two by two, one of lesser experience goes along with a companion who has had more experience in the work. Such a systematic visitation of the town with a presentation of the Holy Scriptures in hundreds of copies, makes a real impact, with a characteristic bitter reaction on the part of some Roman Catholics ; but also many favourable impressions with permanent good results. There have been numbers of cases of individuals and whole families who have become interested not only in reading the book they purchase at the time of this special drive, but later they have associated themselves with the local Christian churches and have finally joined them as members.

In the evenings of the Institute week, we hold each night a special popular service in a different church and with a different speaker who presents the main address, dealing with some special subject on the power and greatness of the Bible, for example : " How the Bible Has Come to Us," " The Work of the Bible Societies," " The Bible as the Rule of Faith and Practice," " The Bible and the Home," " The Bible and Youth," " The Bible and the Nation," " The Bible and Daily Living," " Light and Life in the Bible," " The Human

Liberties and the Bible," etc. In these popular services the local churches help with some special choir or song number. Two or three colporteurs are invited every evening to narrate briefly one of the outstanding experiences of their Bible colportage. These vivid stories are very interesting, and impressive and have contributed to encourage the pastors and their churches to circulate the Scriptures in a more active and systematic way in their own communities afterwards.

These popular gatherings as well as all other meetings sponsored in connection with the holding of the Colporteurs' Institute, are all of an inter-denominational character, of a real Christian atmosphere and have become in some instances the occasion for the initiation of a new era of fraternal relations and Christian fellowship between local pastors and churches of different evangelical denominations. In our meetings, all Christians, although belonging to different denominations, feel entirely at home ; everybody is strengthened in his Christian faith and continues as a loyal, proud and happy member of his own church ; every Christian is led to realise that he forms part of one greater Christian family that accepts the Bible as its rule of faith and conduct, believes in and worships the same God, is saved by grace by the same Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, and is led and sanctified by the same Holy Spirit. On the very last of these popular night meetings, and as the last number of the closing programme, there takes place an act of special consecration of the colporteurs and the Agency Secretary. All are gathered in a circle on the platform, joined by their hands, and sing together with the congregation, " God be with you till we meet again." Then the Agency Secretary leads in a prayer of consecration and finally, the presiding minister dismisses the congregation with the Apostolic benediction.

Formation of the Teaching Staff. The personnel that forms the teaching staff of the Colporteurs' Institute is invited by the Agency Secretary with sufficient time ahead, assigning them the special subjects, dates and series of periods in which they are to present their lectures or teaching material. These voluntary and competent helpers are chosen from amongst the local pastors where the Institute is to be held and from other places, always giving opportunity to Christian workers of different evangelical denominations. Whenever possible, and if the person is available, a Christian medical doctor is invited to give two or three simple lectures on the care and preventive measures the colporteurs should take as they go about, in order to avoid tropical or contagious diseases and infections of various sorts ; on first aid in cases of accidents, and on other hygienic measures and suggestions for the upkeep of their good health.

Every activity of the Institute is supported with interest, enthusiasm, and a fine spirit of Christian fraternity by the colporteurs. This fraternal spirit is fostered as the men join together in singing, praying, studying, participating in discussions, eating and playing. The opportunity for these same contacts as well as many informal conversations with the Agency Secretary, helps to establish a bond of sympathetic understanding and goodwill between the men on the field and headquarters.

Results of the Institutes are many and of varied nature. First of all, the colporteurs go back to their tasks better informed, better trained, and with an enthusiasm for their calling. They obtain from the group experience and encouragement and strength that sustains them during long months of lonely travel, when so many of their contacts are with hostile persons and fanatics who attack and insult not only the colporteur, but also the Word of God. For the Agency Secretary, there results a more intimate companionship

with his colporteurs and a deeper understanding of their needs and problems. In addition, there is the great good that comes to the local community as a result of a careful community-wide distribution effort and the series of Christian services through the week. The local churches profit from the stimulation of having a group of Christian workers in their midst not only studying, but also helping in a local Christian programme.

Because of the many excellent results of these Institutes, the Mexico Agency endeavours to hold them annually.

IMPRESSIONS OF EUROPE

GILBERT DARLINGTON

(Dr. G. Darlington, Treasurer of the American Bible Society, spent several weeks in Europe this summer in connection with the meeting of the U.B.S. Standing Committee. The following paragraphs which he wrote at our request give in outline some of his general impressions of the Continent. Ed.)

IN the five countries I visited in Europe, there are many people who are trying to extend the areas of life in which brotherhood prevails and to reduce as much as possible the areas of life in which there is belligerency. Brotherhood requires that we forgive those who err. When, however, the strong deliberately plan aggression against those who are weak, and not only refuse to listen to the voice of the Church, but also are prepared to silence the voice of the Church if necessary, we have a very different situation from that of a misguided brother who errs through ignorance or through weakness. Large numbers of people in Europe believe that appeasement such as occurred at Munich, where a strong aggressor is rewarded at the expense and well-being of brethren who are weak, will not permanently solve any political problems or bring peace and justice to the world. In Europe, therefore, I found a widespread recognition of the relevance of the Scripture which reads : *He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen* ? (I John 4:20)

Europe is still being rebuilt after the destruction and ravages of war, but the faith that inspires its rebuilding to-day is based not so much on the shifting sands of material and temporary values that war and violence can liquidate and destroy, but on the more solid rock of spiritual and eternal values that are the unshakable foundations of a nobler and more enduring world. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.* (Psalm 127:1)

Let me give three examples of what I found in Europe to-day :

1. In Greece the Greek Church and Government invited representatives from all parts of the world to come to do honour to St. Paul who first brought the Christian message to Greece 1900 years ago. In his first written epistle, St. Paul wrote to the Church at Thessalonica : *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you : for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.* (I Thess. 4:9)

Pilgrims from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Western Hemisphere found that Greek Christians of to-day are still deserving of St. Paul's praise.

Amid the finest stone sculptures and architecture that the world has seen, St. Paul stressed the unity of the human race, saying: *God... hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.* (Acts 17:26) Since man is God's offspring, brotherhood, therefore, is of more value than shrines of gold, silver or stone which are the work of men's hands.

It was fitting that on the very Areopagus in Athens where St. Paul is believed to have spoken, representatives of so many nations did honour to the great Apostle of the Gentiles. St. Paul knew the full meaning of Christian brotherhood, for he wrote to the Galatians that among the children of God by faith *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* (Gal. 3:28)

2. There are some who think of the French people as sheep without a shepherd, but night after night in Paris 12,000 people sit in the open square before Notre Dame cathedral to see the dramatic pageant of one who foretold *upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; . . . . Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.* (Luke 21:25, 26) This vivid, nightly portrayal of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus the Good Shepherd who shed His redeeming blood to save His sheep is made doubly significant because of Jesus' unqualified promise to His disciples : *Heaven and earth shall pass away : but my words shall not pass away.* (Luke 21:33)

3. In and round about the great Olympic Stadium in Berlin on 15th July, 300,000 people gathered in a drizzling rain to attend an open-air service whose sole purpose was to testify without any political or economic propaganda that, if we are brothers in our homes, brothers in our churches, brothers in our communities, brothers in our work and brothers in the world, then we can claim that Jesus Christ is our brother through His redeeming blood.

These 300,000 people standing for two long hours in a drizzling rain gave eloquent testimony to the faith that the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, as enshrined in the sayings of Jesus Christ, are an important part of the solid rock on which alone a free and just world can be built. Rains may still fall and floods come, and winds blow and beat upon the ecumenical house that Christian brotherhood is building throughout all the world to-day, but as it is founded on this rock, it will not fall or fail.

Europe has learned this lesson the hard way, like Isaiah of old, who wrote at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Babylonian captivity : *All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field : . . . The grass withereth, the flower fadeth : but the word of our God shall stand for ever.* (Isaiah 40:6 and 8)

THE REVISION OF THE LUTHER BIBLE

ERNST-EMIL FISCH

THE General Secretary of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, Olivier Béguin, in a recent issue of the monthly periodical " Zeichen der Zeit " (published in Eastern Berlin), described our age as an age of the re-discovery of the Bible, in which a revolution is making itself felt by which the whole world will gradually be touched, and which is even being seen in the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches ; this is also true of Germany. Our people too and our churches want to re-discover what the Bible has to say to us in our present position. This is seen not only in the eagerness with which the Bible

is approached in Bible studies, not only in the attempts to produce new Bible-reading plans for Church and home, but the Bible is to-day the centre of the work of all church circles and unions, it is the centre of the home missionary work of the Inner Mission. The re-discovery of the Bible was the incentive for the creation of the Bible week through the working committee of the people's mission. And the Bible Sunday of the evangelical Bible Societies in Germany, which had been largely forgotten, is in many places again being observed and requested.

Under such circumstances, is it any wonder that to-day the demand has again arisen for a good German Bible text and that a German Bible version is desired which takes account of the latest results of textual criticism and knowledge, thus bringing us as near as possible to the best rendering of the original text, but which is, on the other hand, in its German expression up-to-date with the latest developments in our language? The latest translations of the Bible and of the New Testament in our day, not least the revision of the Luther Bible, seek to do justice to these requirements.

During the last thirty years or so two commissions have been working in sacrificial faithfulness on the revision of the Luther Bible ; the result of this work is that Dr. Burghart, for many years the President of the Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft zu Berlin and who was the Chairman of the two commissions, has now been able to hand over the final text to the Union of Evangelical Bible Societies for publication. The importance with which this work is regarded within the world of theological specialists can be seen from the fact that in the granting of an honorary doctorate of theology to the Chairman of the Stuttgart Bible Society, Prelate Lic. Schlatter, mention was made that he " in particular also promoted the important work of the revision of the Luther Bible which had been in preparation for many years." An intermediary stage was reached in 1938 with the publication of a tentative edition of the New Testament. In 1949 the New Testament " after a further revision instigated by the German evangelical Bible Societies " was printed in manuscript form by the Berlin Bible Society. Dr. Niemöller presented this manuscript to the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany(EKD) for approval. This was to be given in the case where no member of the Council, that is to say no church, raised objections to the text. The objection was not lacking : " this text," it was said from one side, " diverges far too much from Luther." But other voices were also heard : " this text," they said, " is still much too near Luther." The approval of the EKD could not therefore be granted.

The comments quoted above not only express the opinions of leading men in our Church, but both views are also held in the congregations, as the writer of this article has experienced on many lecture tours.

The conservative view seeks the unaltered preservation of the Luther text. But it cannot ignore the fact that we to-day read the Luther Bible in the revision of 1892 or 1914 in which, for example, the outdated word " Krebs " has been replaced in Ephesians 6:14 by the word " Panzer " (breastplate). Nor is it evident what right we have to demand of our descendants that they should maintain the Luther text in the revision in which we have it to-day when further changes occur in the German language !

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the influential voices which are heard in the circle around Rudolf Alexander Schröder and Dr. Knolle. They demand that the Bible as a book for Church use should go back to the old Luther text, back before the first Bible revision, firstly in order to preserve

the German language, the softening down of which should not be included in the Bible, and also because each revision destroys the old musical and powerful tones of Luther. This latter demand should not be overlooked. But this concern for the preservation of the language is not a Church problem. The question which the churches and the Bible Societies in Germany have to ask is rather : how will the Word of God be best heard by the Church to-day ? That was what Luther asked. And therefore, in every edition of the Bible for which he was responsible he sought to improve the linguistic expression. And so we do not possess *the* Luther Bible to which we could go back.

To-day we are therefore faced with the serious question, whether we should preserve the Luther Bible unaltered, running the risk that it will be read to succeeding generations as a holy book but not be understood by them, or whether we should follow the changes in our language in the Luther Bible ? The Roman Church still reads at mass a Latin translation which goes back to Jerome, and therefore a translation which the congregation to-day no longer understands and which must first be interpreted to them. The Russian Church still reads the Bible in the old Slavonic translation, which no Russian any longer understands. Is that also to be the fate one day of our Luther Bible ?

A small circle in our churches, to which predominantly the younger generation belongs, takes still another stand with regard to the Bible text. They say it would have been Luther's wish that no consideration should be given to *his* translation. In order to make the Word really understood, a completely new translation into the language of to-day should be made from the original text and the Bible should be read in the churches in this language.

The problems with the Luther Bible have caused many a new translation to be made to-day. Thus the Stuttgart Bible Society prints beside the Luther Bible, the Menge Bible and the New Testament in a translation by L. Thimme. The Berlin Bible Society has published some of the Epistles of Paul in the translation by the brothers Stahn, and an edition of the Zürich Bible is also being prepared by that Society for Eastern Germany. Mention should further be made of the very fluently written, but sometimes very freely translated New Testament of Pfäfflin. But with every new version, the great problem of translation is made ever more obvious : it has to be either as literal as possible and therefore an all the drier German, or as flowing as possible in the German text, which implies that personal interpretation plays a more important part, as is known to be the case in some places in the Luther translation.

Modern translations have now found a way into Church usage abroad, as in America and Denmark. But the majority of the Church members in the EKD would not like to miss the Luther language in our services. Even in Switzerland, where they have the excellent Zürich Bible translation, some of the pastors in the Reformed Church use the Luther Bible for reading in their services. The power of its language shows how strongly Luther was gripped by the Spirit of God in making this translation.

But what is to happen now ? The Lutheran churches in Germany want to read the Sunday pericopes in their own language revision, in this way referring back to Luther, and also to revise the Psalter. The Bible Societies hope soon to be able to present to the churches, besides the present Luther text, also the newly revised text which assimilates Luther's language into our present-day linguistic expression. In addition, the Bible Societies will continue their efforts for the production of an acceptable and valid Bible translation in the language of to-day.

The fact is, however, becoming more and more apparent : for Bible work in the churches a good modern translation beside the Luther text is indispensable. But the Bible text which links the churches in East and West Germany, Lutheran, Reformed and United, with one another in the linguistic expression of services will remain, as heretofore, the Luther text. Although unity as to the extent of the revision has not yet been reached, it will surely come, and God's eternal Word will be read in the churches of Germany in the language of Luther, but in a carefully revised text. The form of the Word of God changes in the course of the centuries with the language of a people, but " The Word of the Lord endureth for ever."

NOTE : Since the above article was written, the *Verband* (Union) of German Bible Societies has again spent much time in discussing the situation. It was finally decided that, in spite of the fact that the revision in its present state has not been validated either by the churches or by the *Verband*, and that there are still a number of misgivings concerning the proposed text, the Berlin and the Stuttgart Bible Societies will issue concurrently a tentative edition of the New Testament with a view to publishing later, in the same way, a tentative edition of the Old Testament.

At the same time, as a contribution to the matter under discussion, the Stuttgart Society (P.W.B.) will publish a tentative edition of the New Testament in the Luther text, revised according to the principles which the P.W.B. would have liked to see adopted by the Revision Committee. German Christians will therefore be presented in the near future with two different revisions of the Luther text of the New Testament, both published in tentative editions.

In view of the fact that probably no revision acceptable to the churches will be available in the near future, some circles in the Union of Lutheran Churches (V.E.L.K.D.) are suggesting that a special Church commission should proceed with a revision along the principles already agreed upon by the Liturgical Commission of the V.E.L.K.D. The latter has already worked on the revision of some texts to be incorporated in the liturgy. *Ed.*

WOMEN'S WORK IN ENGLAND AND WALES

MARJORIE S. HARRISON

The " Christian Fair."

WOMEN'S services to the British and Foreign Bible Society date back almost to the beginnings of the Society itself, with the founding of " Female Associations " at the same time that Bible Society Auxiliaries were being formed in many English towns and cities. These Female Associations had as their purpose the distribution of Scriptures amongst the poorer classes and also the raising of money to help the Society in its work overseas. One would have expected that these efforts would have been welcomed by the friends of the Society, but, amusing as it seems to us to-day, there was considerable doubt in those days as to the propriety of women taking a share in this kind of work, and it was not until 1831 that the "Christian Fair," as they were called, were even permitted to attend the annual meetings

of the Society! However, times and customs have changed considerably since those days, and for many years now the Society has been proud and appreciative of the thousands of women who give their time and energies so generously. A very large proportion of the Society's income from England and Wales comes through the efforts of 10,000 or more voluntary collectors in the Auxiliaries. To-day this is one of the main services rendered to the Society by women, who form the great majority of this army of workers.

Recent Developments.

There are many other ways in which women are called upon to help forward this work, and opportunity for considerable development came during the Second World War, when the Society needed to find new ways of increasing its support from the Home Churches and, as the men were not available, appealed to the women. In 1941 a Women's Advisory Committee was formed at the London Bible House and, for the first time, women were admitted to membership of the General Committee. The Women's Advisory Committee, of which Miss Mildred Cable has been Chairman since its formation, now meets monthly at the Bible House and consists of Women Vice-Presidents and members of the General Committee, with co-opted representatives from the Auxiliaries.

Two years later, following its policy of developing the work amongst women, the General Committee decided to increase the number of women staff, and there are now, in addition to the Women's Secretary at the Bible House, eight Regional Women's Secretaries, one in each Region of England and one in Wales. These women are full-time members of the staff, working in close co-operation with the Regional and District Secretaries, and are responsible for the organisation of Women's Work in their Regions, keeping in touch with their voluntary workers in the Auxiliaries, taking speaking and preaching engagements, and generally trying to encourage knowledge and support of the work amongst the women in the Churches.

In the Auxiliaries.

There are some 1,500 Auxiliaries in England and Wales, and in about 250 of them there is now some form of organised Women's Work—a Women's Sub-Committee on Women's Association in the larger Auxiliaries and a Women's Secretary in the smaller ones. Special women's meetings are held occasionally in a number of other Auxiliaries as well. One cannot here go in great detail into the organisation of these Women's Committees and the way in which they work, but, speaking in general terms, their activities fall under three main heads :—

(*a*) *Prayer*. The Bible Society Prayer Calendar has a wide circulation amongst the women for use in their own private prayers. In addition, a number of the Committees now spend perhaps the first fifteen or twenty minutes of their meetings in prayer together, and in some Auxiliaries the women are now holding public intercession Services once a quarter in some central Church, led either by one of themselves or by one of the local clergy or ministers.

(*b*) *Knowledge*. As one of the most serious obstacles to greater support from the Home Churches is ignorance of Bible Society work, the visiting of local Women's Fellowships, Mothers' Unions, and so on, by voluntary speakers, is of great importance in attempting to widen the circle of Bible Society interest. Well over 2,000 of these meetings were visited in England last year by local speakers. This work necessitates the formation of panels

of speakers, who need plenty of Bible Society material on which they can draw. A Speakers' Handbook has been prepared for them, and in addition they can get their more up-to-date information from the Society's magazines and the Women's News-letter which is sent out three times a year from the Bible House. Speakers' Conferences and Training Days are also arranged from time to time in different districts. There are now over 800 of these voluntary speakers in the country, but there is still a great deal of scope for development here. About 1,100 women's meetings are now affiliated to the Bible Society, and there is no doubt that they bring increased support both in prayer and in financial giving of various kinds.

(*c*) *Giving*. In addition to the work of the panels of speakers, the Women's Committees arrange definite money-raising efforts, such as Sales of Work, a Bring and Buy stall at the Annual Meeting, Coffee Mornings, Garden Meetings and so on.

In the Future.

As Women's Work is established at present in only 250 of the Home Auxiliaries, there is plenty of room for development. This means finding and interesting local women who are willing to take responsibility for this work in their town or Church. One useful method of helping these women is the holding of Day Conferences, to which are invited the "key" women from the Auxiliaries over a given area. They meet from about 11.0 in the morning till about 3.30 to report the work going on in their Auxiliaries, hear a speaker from the Bible House who will tell them about the work overseas, discuss any suggestions the Regional Women's Secretary may have for developments in the Auxiliaries, and over lunch and tea together meet each other informally.

The whole future of this side of Bible Society work depends on deepening the sense of responsibility amongst Christian women in the Churches. This means that there must be, too, a deeper knowledge of the work. There is evidence that where the work is known it makes its own appeal and one side which particularly attracts the women is the possibility, through the Bible Society, of giving some practical help to Christians overseas, and so bringing a sense of greater reality to their fellowship with them. They appreciate, too, the links that are now being made between their own Committees in England and similar groups of women in India and Australia. As these links grow in number and the fellowship deepens, so the interest of Christian women in different countries should grow and deepen, till it becomes a real source of strength to the work of the Bible Societies throughout the world.

THE BIBLE AND THE LAYMAN

SUZANNE DE DIÉTRICH

DAILY Bible study is a standing feature in the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches at Bossey. At the Laymen's Conference held under the auspices of the World Council of Churches at Bad-Boll in July, 1951, an hour and a half was devoted every morning to Bible study in groups. What follows is based mainly (but not exclusively) on this two-fold experience.

Our first remark would be that laymen, even when they are faithful members of their churches, very often find it difficult to know how to read

and interpret the Bible. There is a still larger group of laymen loosely attached to the Church, whose ignorance regarding the Bible is appalling. We must be aware of the fact that Family Prayers, including the reading of the Scriptures, are less and less practised in most " Christian " homes ; on the other hand, on the Continent of Europe at least, religious instruction and Sunday schools stop after confirmation (at the age of 13 or 14 in certain countries, in others a few years later). Thus adults meet with all kinds of difficulties in reading their Bible ; they do not know where to begin and what to make of it ; they do not see its relevance to daily life.

Those who follow Bible reading lists are certainly greatly helped and their number grows. But even they would need further help in order to see the message as a whole and to apply it to their problems.

Our second remark is that where the Church is faced with hard times of war, suffering and persecution, the Bible message becomes *alive*. We mention here only as a reminder what happened during the war in prisoner-of-war camps ; or the place held by the Bible in the Confessing Church in Germany. The same would apply to-day to countries where signs of a real revival are to be seen, as for instance in Hungary. A few days ago, a Korean friend told us about the place held by the Bible in the life of the Korean Church ; it is known that already half a century ago the Bible was at the heart of the great evangelistic movement which swept over Korea. The striking thing is that this movement has been going on and that the whole life of the Church is grounded in the Scriptures ; many of its members know great portions of them by heart. Intensive training courses take place during the winter for laymen who want to become Sunday school teachers or Bible study leaders.

Our third remark concerns more specifically the Laymen's Movements which have developed recently on European soil. Not only Bossey, but the " Männerwerk " or the " Evangelical Academies " in Germany, the "Associations Professionnelles Protestantes " of France and other similar groups give a central place to the study of the Bible. We are struck again and again with the eagerness with which laymen listen to the biblical message when it is presented in a challenging way ; and the still greater eagerness with which they read the Bible when gathered together in a study group, provided the leader knows how to stimulate their interest and how to launch them on a real piece of personal research. We must insist on this point : the Bible really grips us when we plunge deeply into it in a spirit of expectancy and prayer, knowing that there lies the secret of life, the answer not only to our personal problems but to the problems of our time.

The main difficulty of laymen is that they are acquainted with isolated passages, but do not know how to place them in their context ; it is an important principal that each part of the Bible should be read in the light of the whole. This is especially important when laymen try to find help in the Bible for the solution of everyday life in home, profession or public life. The Bible offers no recipes for the solution of such problems, no written code of behaviour. It confronts us with our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, and with a community united in Him, guided by the Holy Spirit. It is within this living fellowship, in communion with the great host of witnesses who have answered God's call through definite obedience in their manifold walks of life, that we in turn can help one another, as members of the Body, to find what concrete step of obedience God requires from us to-day. We have often been impressed with the earnestness with which men engaged in business and industry, in the teaching profession, in social work or politics,

search their Bible in order to see more clearly God's will for them in their own circumstances.

At the Bad-Boll Laymen's Conference (July, 1951) a special Commission, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Carl G. Schweitzer, dealt with the theme : "Difficulties and Requirements facing the Layman in his Study of the Bible." The report begins with the following words : " The central importance of this theme is clear. The universal priesthood of all believers stands or falls with the right solving of this question ; and without this universal priesthood our parishes and churches cannot be truly alive."

We believe this remark to be very important : it is through their study of the Bible that members of the Church *come of age* as living and active members of Christ's Body.

The Bible is an amazing school of obedience towards God and of freedom towards the powers that be ; to be trained in this school means that we grow in spiritual discernment and firmness, that we become " persons " and at the same time true members of the community, free from inward tensions, ambitions and inhibitions, free for the service of our fellow-men, and more specifically of those fellow-men that God puts on our path in our daily activity. In difficult times it is on laymen thus trained that the Church can rely for carrying on the testimony to the Gospel and maintaining the life of the community, when outward pressure threatens the institution, as such, or deprives it of its leadership. We know to-day that wherever laymen are firmly rooted in the Scriptures, the life of the Church will go on ; that where this is not the case, a church can be swept away by adverse forces or led to all kinds of syncretism or compromise. And this compels us to prepare the seven thousand who will not yield.

The Bad-Boll Conference had a special commission dealing with the difficulties and requirements facing laymen in the study of the Bible. Several of these difficulties we have already mentioned. A good deal of time was devoted to methodological problems and great stress was laid upon *Bible study groups*.

Such groups need the help of experts, theologians and pastors ; but these should stand by and never dominate the group. Laymen want to discover the truth of the Bible for themselves. If the meal is presented ready made and chewed it will kill the freshness of their direct approach to the biblical message. A more genuine sharing of both convictions and questions will often take place in little groups meeting without the presence of a ' specialist.' Of course a certain technical preparation is necessary, but personal prayerful meditation is still more essential. We are always in danger of talking *about* the Bible instead of listening *to* the Bible. And this danger is greater for the theologian than for the layman.

Such Bible study groups are generally most successful when they are brought together because of some common concern : young people, young married couples, men and women belonging to the same profession, and so on.

The Bad-Boll Commission formulated some definite suggestions :

(1) All churches should be recommended to encourage the formation of such Bible study groups.

(2) Places should be provided for the training of group leaders in countries where they do not yet exist.

(3) Special courses should be started for the various secular professions in which the relevance of the biblical message for a given profession would be shown.

(4) Bible groups should be provided with adequate literature, such as word books, commentaries, concordances, and so on, whenever possible through a lending library.

(5) New literature adapted to various ages and degrees of knowledge is urgently required.

(6) Material is already provided through correspondence courses in several countries (England, Holland, Sweden) and a similar course is now planned in Germany.

(7) The Secretariate for Laymen's Work should keep the members of the Conference informed of new developments or worth-while new literature. The final conclusion was that the so-called " Laymen's Movement " was to be a Biblical Movement, or nothing at all.

We do not want to close this brief survey without mentioning another aspect of Bible study as carried on at Bossey and Bad-Boll, namely its *ecumenical* significance. It has been found again and again that it is in our common Bible study that theological and denominational differences have been bridged in the most effective way and that the reality of the ' koinonia ' (fellowship) of the Church has been experienced. " We have marvelled," says a member of the Bad-Boll Conference, " that people coming from such different backgrounds should study the Bible with the same reverence and the same joy." The coming together of Greek Orthodox and Protestants in the same group was felt by many to be a great enrichment.

" What struck me," says another member of the Conference, " is that each of us has had to face so personally his Christian responsibility with all its consequences."

The Word of God thus reveals itself again and again as " living and active," the two-edged sword " piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow." And it does not only reveal our personal sins and shortcomings but also those of our community, of the corporate group to which we belong ; it cuts right through our personal, our social and national life. It is only by going through such a school that laymen will ever be able to be what they are rather easily and glibly challenged to become : " the spearhead of the Church in the world."

Only God's Word, testified to by the Holy Spirit, can keep the spearhead from soon breaking its edges in the battles of life. And the first lesson will be one of humility : " We have understood how great is our poverty. But Christ lives. He is greater than our poverty." Let this remark of a layman be our concluding word.

NOTES ON NEW TRANSLATIONS

THE Rev. W. J. Bradnock, Translations Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society reports the following developments in the field of new translations supervised by his department :—

Luyia

This name represents a new attempt to form a union language to meet the needs of the north Kavirondo group, and the chief translator is Miss L.

Appleby. A very successful and fully representative committee was held at Kisumu in July which was considered to have marked a great forward step in co-operative language work in Nyanza. Bishop Beecher was in the chair and all the main societies at work in the area were represented. Discussions were based partly on linguistic notes prepared by the translators and an examination of the draft translation of the text of Genesis 1 and 2:1-6. There was a marked spirit of unanimity. The meeting augurs well for rapid progress in this important project.

Cambodian

A translator, the Rev. A. L. Hammond of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, has now completed the translation of the Cambodian Bible with the help of a committee, and he hopes to arrange for the composition of the text on his return to Indo-China from America next year. This is the first complete Cambodian Bible and will be available for a community numbering three to four millions. At present, however, there are only 1,000 Christian readers.

Vietnamese

The New Testament in Vietnamese is approaching completion and arrangements for its printing will shortly be set in hand. The work has been done by a committee presided over by the Rev. John D. Olsen, and he has been assisted by the Rev. I. R. Stebbings, the Rev. R. M. Jackson and four Vietnamese pastors. The language is spoken by 25 million people, but the actual Protestant community numbers only 30,000. About one-third of the vocabulary is borrowed from Chinese, which is to Vietnamese what Latin is to English.

Pidgin English

A report recently given wide publicity in the press that a Bible had appeared in Pidgin English is incorrect. It probably gained currency from the fact that during the war a military chaplain in New Guinea used this language for preaching to the natives, and that a manuscript of one Gospel was actually prepared, though never printed. Dr. Capell writes : " The policy of the New Guinea administration is to eliminate that language and teach correct English. Pidgin is a ' class ' language. It is associated with the dominance of the white caste, and the official policy is that it must go. In all government, and most mission schools, English is now taught alongside the vernacular or regional language. Only one major mission to my knowledge still teaches in Pidgin, and even that one is trying to teach correct English as well."

Presentation Copy of the Old Testament in Kikuyu

The Rev. K. L. Downing, of the Africa Inland Mission, writes :

" I am at loss adequately to express my feelings on the receipt of this volume. It is a beautifully printed and bound book and as such would bring joy to any lover of good books ; but to me the joy of seeing this Old Testament at last published in Kikuyu far surpasses other emotions concerning it. I was born among the Kikuyu people and I have longed with them that the entire Bible should be printed in their language. And yet it has taken practically half a century since they first heard the Gospel, for the Old Testament to be provided."

Punjabi-Persian New Testament

The new text of the Punjabi-Persian New Testament is shortly to appear in Pakistan. When the Punjab was divided into two parts by the division of India, the language of the then current New Testament became unacceptable in Pakistan, as many of the religious terms were derived from Hindi and Sanscrit. A committee headed by Dr. H. J. Stewart has now completed a three-year task and has produced a work that should have wide acceptance in Pakistan. There is also a committee working on the Old Testament.

Notes on Contributors

A. L. HAIG : Secretary for Europe, British and Foreign Bible Society.

C. H. MORRIS : British and Foreign Bible Society Secretary, Brazil.

H. T. MARROQUIN : American Bible Society Secretary, Mexico.

THE REV. DR. G. DARLINGTON : Associate Treasurer, UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES ; Treasurer, American Bible Society.

PASTOR E. E. FISCH : Travelling Secretary of the Union of Evangelical Bible Societies in Germany.

MISS M. S. HARRISON : Secretary for Women's Work, British and Foreign Bible Society.

MISS S. de DIÉTRICH : Member of Staff of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland ; author of " Le Renouveau Biblique," " Le Dessein de Dieu."